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Follow-up actions to the recommendations of the International Conference on Population and Development

Statement submitted by International Women's Health Coalition

The Secretary-General has received the following statement, which is being circulated in accordance with paragraphs 36 and 37 of Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

* E/CN.9/2009/1.

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Statement*

1. Five years remain to achieve the Program of Action agreed to at the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD). The Programme of Action provides the foundation stone — a blueprint in fact — to achieve the eight Millennium Development Goals. The heart of the Programme of Action and a target under MDG 5 is universal access to sexual and reproductive health and protection of reproductive rights. Only when we achieve this target will we secure social justice and human rights for all.

2. Let us all commit to three core actions in the next five years:

   a. Implement comprehensive reproductive health services, which include family planning; skilled care during pregnancy and delivery and postpartum; access to safe abortion; prevention, care, and treatment for sexually transmitted infections, including HIV.

   b. Strengthen health systems to ensure equitable access to these services, information and sexuality education, particularly for the largest ever generation of adolescents.

   c. Prioritize policies, programs, and legislative and judiciary action to protect the human right of women to have control over and decide freely and responsibly on matters related to their sexuality, including sexual and reproductive health, free of coercion, discrimination and violence.

3. In this time of economic uncertainty there is no more important investment to be made. Only healthy women whose human rights are protected can be fully productive workers and effective participants in their country's political processes. Only when women are healthy and empowered can they raise and educate healthy children. These are the building blocks of stable societies and growing economies, and imperative in their own right.

* Issued without formal editing.